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## Green Jobs Sprouting In Emerging Industries



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Despite political wrangling on Capitol Hill over whether moving forward with more federal stimulus funds to spur green job growth would prove successful, local governments and private sector businesses are steadily working on comprehensive plans. Efforts in Long Beach, Los Angeles County and across California, now looked at as the leader in the green economy movement, have high hopes for a future workforce.

What is a “green job” exactly? Some say it is a job within an industry that benefits the environment, such as energy efficiency, renewable energy and green building. Green jobs are often healthier for workers, as manufacturing solar panels and wind turbines doesn’t come with the same risk as working at an oil refinery, for example.

The California Employment Development Department (EDD) defines a green job as one that “produces goods or services that result in generating and storing renewable energy; recycling existing materials; energy efficient product manufacturing, distributing, construction, installation and maintenance; education, compliance and awareness; and natural and sustainable product manufacturing.” There are also jobs available in such fields from employers taking part in “sustainable business practices.”

While the green economy and its industries are still emerging, many economic development agencies and groups are coming out with analysis of what progress has been made and what constitutes a green job as these opportunities evolve.

The EDD conducted a survey last year that sampled 51,100 employers in the state, representing all industries. The survey, originally released in March, found roughly 500,000 green jobs in California when looking at jobs that either supply products or services.

Additionally, a study called Many Shades of Green by Next 10, an independent, nonpartisan California research organization, says that energy efficiency jobs in the Los Angeles area grew 77 percent, with green businesses across the state increasing 45 percent from 1995 to 2008.

For Long Beach, and other cities that have made large sustainability strides this year, this could be a sign of job opportunities to come. Right now, the public and private sectors are working together to steadily create the infrastructure and training necessary for green job growth.

Long Beach, which established its Office of Sustainability in 2008 and its Sustainable City Plan in February of this year, was named by the Natural Resources Defense Council and USA Today as a 2010 Smart City. Along with major green efforts at the Port of Long Beach, the city is implementing green building mandates, retrofitting municipal buildings, providing tax incentives and calling for a greenhouse gas inventory.

Meanwhile, Kenneth Nash, manager of the city's Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Board, said the regional job assistance program is breaking ground on a collaborative effort to implement an 18-month initiative to help those looking for work in the green industry.

The Southern California initiative, called "So Cal G2" was awarded a \$250,000 grant to look at four categories in the green economy: transportation; building and efficiency; water; and solar energy generation. Working with 11 other regional investment boards in Ventura, Orange and Los Angeles counties, the plan is to design and implement workforce and economic development strategies to help grow the region's green economy.

"What we're trying to do, as the definition and opportunities evolve, is provide basic fundamental cross-cutting skills through out programs," Nash said. "That will orient youth and adults to the opportunities out there and provide foundational skills so they can basically grow with the future, whatever that's going to be."

### **Green Business Practices**

Tom Bowman, owner of Tom Bowman Design Group, a design and project management firm in Signal Hill, is a strong believer in the green shift. He says he was motivated to implement energy and resource saving efforts into his small business after learning the effects of climate change from some of the most eminent researchers in the country.

Through clean energy business practices, Bowman said he has been able to test and prove the "business case" for going green by implementing simple efficiency upgrades and documenting cost savings.

Some of his green practices include using free fluorescent lights for the office, trading the company's

SUV for a hybrid vehicle, using a system that shuts off all energy at night and buying an energy efficient copier and scanner. His next step is replacing the grass outside the office with native plant vegetation to reduce water consumption. Winning awards for his efforts, he has saved \$9,000 a year in costs by reducing the company's carbon footprint 65 percent in two years.

"When I got the report I was utterly shocked," he said. "Small business is the engine of our economy. We're a small business and I can tell you since we are successful, our client base has been energized. So many people believe in it."

After being in business for 20 years, Bowman said the green movement has bolstered his ability to hire on three new employees this year for projects, which in turn results in more job generation down the line. His design works involve a wide variety of media and comprehensive projects for museums, tradeshow and briefing centers, some geared toward green education, in the United States.

"If companies are investing in energy efficiency it creates construction jobs," he said. "We've hired this year new positions . . . these are good paying jobs and those jobs will probably create another set of jobs. This work is keeping probably several dozen people employed."

Bill Rouse, general manager for the Long Beach Yellow Cab Company, said the company is working with the city on the second year of its greening program to replace its vehicles with compressed natural gas (CNG) and hybrid models.

By the end of this year, the company will be using 50 hybrid or CNG vehicles, including 30 Prius vehicles, in service out of the 155 total vehicles. He said all of the cabs are individually owned and operated by the drivers, many of whom went green after receiving grants and incentives from the South Coast Air Quality Management District and other agencies.

"It's really our owners stepping up," Rouse said. "Long Beach is really out in the front."

Although many of the drivers initially felt skeptical and worried about converting to a hybrid or CNG vehicle, after implementing the program, many appreciate the Prius's lower maintenance costs. Passenger response has also been overwhelmingly positive, he said.

Some efforts have come across as more of a grassroots effort, as a way for business communities to stick together in these harsh economic times. Green Long Beach, comprised of individuals, community groups, non-profit organizations, businesses and city agencies, has successfully held two annual Green Festivals in the East Village Arts District. The group is a part of the non-profit Catalyst Community.

Elliot Gonzalez, an economics major who helped form the group, said this year's event – which was held on May 22 and featured a talk by noted green architect Eric Corey Freed, an organic farmer's market, music and entertainment, an eco-friendly product and business expo, sustainable fashion show, art exhibits, community garden and workshops, food, and bike valet parking – attracted close to 3,000 people. The city subsequently declared May 22 the official Green Long Beach Day, Gonzalez said.

"Long Beach and green local businesses go hand in hand," he said. "I definitely believe the green economy is right around the corner."

The group's next event is a mixer coming up on September 19 at Zephyr Vegetarian Café, 340 E. 4th St. For more information, visit [greenlb.org](http://greenlb.org), or call 562/646-SOIL.

## **Preparing A Workforce**

If the green economy is right around the corner, some say there needs to be a workforce trained in green jobs. In California, there are 48 training programs throughout the state that are offered by local workforce investment boards, community colleges, labor and trade organizations and private industry, according to the state's Clean Energy Workforce Training Program. The programs provide hands-on training for such jobs as installing solar panels and wind turbines, maintaining electric vehicles, installing water and energy-saving devices and researching fuel cell technologies.

For instance, last year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded the Los Angeles Conservation Corps \$700,000 in funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide job training for 160 students to learn the latest environmental technologies and prepare them for green jobs.

Stella Ursua has started her own effort to create the first green academy in Long Beach, offering assistance to job seekers in both high and low-income neighborhoods. The academy, to be called the North American School of Green Technology, is scheduled to launch mid-October at Hancock University, located at 600 Long Beach Blvd. Courses will include solar photovoltaic installation, weatherization, building performance analysis and other training.

Ursua said she is working with UCLA and Cal State Long Beach professors to develop the curriculum. Her goal, she added, is to educate people living in under-performing areas of the city. "We wanted to do something in the districts of Central Long Beach, that whole corridor, and looking at North Long Beach," she said. "There's a huge lack of awareness in green building and we want to be out in those communities. We need these people to be ready for these jobs."

Mark Smith, program manager of Cal State Long Beach's Green and Sustainable Building Certificate Program, said the program is expanding this year. Part of the university's College of Continuing and Professional Education, it offered its first green sustainable certificate course in spring of last year.

"Because of the success of that program, we decided to continue with a green and environment program area," he said. "We now have a solar panel installation program, a green interior design course, which is directed toward interior designers and homeowners, and landscaping."

The extension courses are not state supported but funded on a self-support basis. Each individual program pays its own way and gives financial assistance toward the campus, through tuition from students.

The courses are driven by the job market as more and more people look to get a new job or improve the one they have. Some have also found it more practical to start a business in these fields, Smith said, adding that the more experience a person has in any particular sector, the more chances of landing a job or having success in a business. "You really have to know where to look," said.

## **Blue Collar To Green Collar**

Although the prospects of the federal government passing a national climate bill that aims to encourage green jobs and enforce government regulations may have hit a roadblock in the Senate, many supporters of the legislation are still holding out in the fight.

Union members and environmentalists launched a nationwide bus tour called "The Job's Not Done," to demonstrate support for the comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation. The tour was put on by the BlueGreen Alliance, a national partnership of labor and environmental organizations, launched by the Steel Workers of America and the Sierra Club in 2006.

Long Beach Councilman Steve Neal, a member of the Communication Workers of America, attended the tour as it touched down in Carson on August 16.

"Unfortunately, there weren't the amount of people there I would have liked to see, but I will say the people that were there were very enthusiastic about the legislation and very supportive," Neal said. "The challenge is getting the information out to the public so people are more aware, which is a challenge for all of us. . . . On a personal level, I'm going to support and do everything I can."

Some unions for blue collar workers see the federal legislation as a way to keep jobs in the United States by mandating certain regulations regarding environmental standards, eventually converting those jobs to become green collar. The term "green collar job" was coined by Van Jones, founder of Green For All, author of The Green Collar Economy, and 2009 green jobs advisor to President Obama.

Neal said it's imperative as a society to start looking at renewable energy and how to make better use of green technology. "We are trying to make sure these jobs are made available to Americans as opposed to losing them to overseas interests," he said. "It's about passing comprehensive climate change legislation that includes a cap on carbon emissions with federal renewable energy and electricity standards. These are provisions that will help prevent the leakage of American jobs to other countries that have weaker or non existing environmental standards."

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